Removing Duplicate Observations in Excel

You will need to use the accompanying Excel spreadsheet to follow these examples.

To delete duplicate observations, select the columns on which you'd like to filter. Then go to menus at the top, select Data | Filter | Advanced Filter. A dialog box will pop open, which is pictured below.

Choose 'Copy to another location' and at the bottom, check 'Unique records only.' Click inside the list range box, and select the range of records you'd like to filter. In this case, with the example cereal data, it's A1 through N:27. Copy this information into the Criteria Range box as well. (Please refer to the picture below.)

You cannot use this procedure to copy the newly unduplicated rows to a new worksheet. You must copy the rows into a location on the same worksheet. (After they are initially copied to the same worksheet, you can copy and move them to another worksheet.)
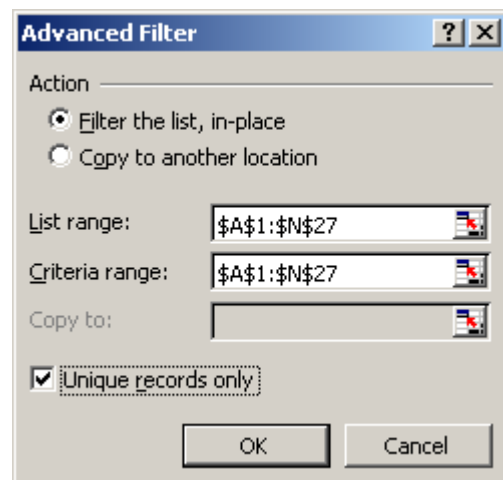
To copy the unique observations, click inside the Copy to box and choose the cell A31. The result will look like this: DelDupes!A31 (Please refer to the picture below.)

This procedure deleted the duplicate data, leaving an exact count of rows. So, you can easily spot that there are now 24 unique sets of observations, that is, 24 unique rows.

If you do not want to delete duplicate data, you can just hide the duplicates. You can do this by selecting 'Filter the list, in-place' instead of 'Copy to another location.' Select the checkbox Unique records only, and enter the cell ranges as you did in the previous example. Notice that only one row of Golden Grahams is still showing, but the row numbers jump from six to nine. The other two records containing golden grahams, rows 7 and 8, are hidden. You can unhide them by going to the top menus and selecting Data | Filter | Show All. You can try this on the second worksheet in the accompanying Excel Workbook, named 'HideDupes.'

Deleting Duplicates

Hiding Duplicates